modifying one or more state attributes associated with said nodes to control merging and

updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database in response to said client request;

and

managing said nodes using said state attributes.

6. (Amended Twice) A manager for one or more nodes in a layered hierarchically

organized database stored in a server on a computer network comprising:

a subset of said nodes configured to be accessed in response to a user request; and

one or more state attributes associated with said nodes configured to be modified to

control merging and updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database in response to

said client request when said subset is used,

wherein said manager is configured to manage said nodes using said state attributes.

11. (Amended Twice) A computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein

configured to manage a plurality of nodes in a layered hierarchically organized database stored in

a server on a computer network;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to access a subset of said nodes

in response to a client request;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to use said subset wherein one or

more state attributes associated with said nodes configured to be modified to control merging and

updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database are modified in response to said

client request; and

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computer readable code configured to cause a computer to manage said nodes using said state attributes.

16. (Amended Twice) An apparatus comprising:

a subset of one or more nodes in a layered hierarchically organized database stored in a server on a computer network configured to be accessed in response to a client request;

one or more state attributes associated with said nodes configured to be modified to control merging and updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database in response to said client request when said subset is used; and

a manager configured to manage said nodes using said state attributes.

Please add new Claims 21-24 as follows:

21. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein each one of said state attributes indicates a last action taken on a data element of one of said nodes, and wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an eXtensible Markup Language (XML) format attribute.

22. (New) The manager of Claim 6, wherein each one of said state attributes indicates a last action taken on a data element of one of said nodes, and wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an XML format attribute.

23. (New) The computer program product of Claim 11, wherein each one of said state attributes indicates a last action taken on a data element of one of said nodes, and wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an XML format attribute.

24. (New) The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein each one of said state attributes indicates a last action taken on a data element of one of said nodes, and wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an XML format attribute.